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# A Comparative Study of the Open Court and Basal Reading Programs

Janice Kathryn Smith  
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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE OPEN COURT  
AND BASAL READING PROGRAMS

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate Faculty  
Central Washington State College

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Education

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by  
Janice Kathryn Smith  
October, 1969

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Amidst the numerous approaches to teaching beginning reading, there appeared in 1967 a new program published by Open Court. It was unique, in respect to the traditional Basal Method, in that reading instruction was integrally related to every other language skill. The program provided a rich variety of materials and organized lesson plans to guide the teacher, but few studies had tested its actual effectiveness in the classroom. The present study was therefore directed toward that end.

#### I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose was to compare the Open Court first grade reading program with a traditional Basal Method being taught at Lakeview Elementary School in the Lake Washington School District. To achieve this end the following null hypotheses were used: (1) No significant difference in reading vocabulary or comprehension will be found between students in the Open Court Program and those taught by a Basal Method, and (2) no significant difference in reading attitude will be found between students in the Open Court Program and those taught by a Basal Method.



Importance of the problem. The monumental importance of reading was reflected by Gates when he stated, "Reading is both the most important and the most troublesome subject in the elementary school curriculum. It is most important since it is an essential tool for learning every other school subject, yet pupils fail more frequently in reading than in any other elementary skill" (24:1).

Since reading is ultimately linked to other areas of learning (29:15), it is essential for the teacher of reading to employ the best possible methods and techniques for teaching this invaluable skill. Thus, the selection of the reading program is often a most significant factor in the child's success or failure in learning to read.

With many reading programs available to the classroom teacher, the choice of the best method for teaching a specific class is quite difficult. Although basal texts have traditionally comprised the core of most reading instruction, many new programs have been introduced on the educational scene in the past decade to complicate the selection of materials.

A new Correlated Language Arts Program published by Open Court appeared in 1967. That same year an extensive study conducted by the Cyprus School District in California highly favored the use of this new reading program (13).

This, however, did not prove that the program could be as successfully employed to teach reading under the specific conditions found in the Lake Washington School District in Kirkland, Washington. It was therefore believed that a study was needed to justify the use of the program under these specific circumstances.

## II. PLAN FOR STUDYING THE PROBLEM

The first grade classes in a Lake Washington Elementary School were studied and described. One group used the Open Court Program and the other a Basal Reading Approach. The two classes were equated according to a system of matched pairs based on the sex of the children, a Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test administered at the end of Kindergarten, and Vocabulary and Comprehension scores obtained from the Gates-MacGintie Primary A Test - Form 1 which was administered in November of 1968.

The Basal group was taught with materials normally used in a Basal or traditional approach to beginning reading. These materials included a basal series of preprimers, primers, and first readers, as well as supplemental materials and books. The other group utilized those materials published by the Open Court Company. Chapter III describes these programs.

The teachers for the study were selected on the basis

of their experience in teaching first grade and their professional competence. They were judged by the school principal to be quite comparable in these aspects.

A descriptive study of both attitudes and achievement was made in which statistical methods were applied to the data to determine the significance of variance between the two groups.

### III. DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED

Basal Reading Program. In general basal materials were considered to be a set of graded textbooks which contained a group of stories and were designed to provide continuity in reading development and sequential training in all the basic skills. For the study this included the first grade preprimers, primers and first readers, plus supplemental materials and books.

Open Court Correlated Language Arts Program. The Correlated Language Arts Program had three main divisions: (1) The foundation program which included two soft-cover reader-workbooks, supplementary storybooks, and a workshop kit containing flash cards and word games; (2) The second semester hard-cover reader; and (3) The teacher's guides for the readers that provide correlated lessons in speaking, listening, composition, spelling, grammar, usage, capitalization, and pronunciation.

Attitude. For the purpose of the study, attitude was considered to be a learned predisposition to act in a characteristically favorable or unfavorable way toward reading stimuli. This predisposition was measured by means of a simple method of ranking school subjects according to preference.

#### IV. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

One of the chief limitations of the study was the size of the sample. At the time the study was being conducted, only one first grade classroom in the school district was to experiment with the Open Court approach to reading. Therefore, the study was limited in scope.

Teacher variables, including the quality and motivation of the teachers, were controlled to the extent that highly qualified, experienced first grade teachers were selected to teach the two classes involved in the study. The selection was based on the teachers' experience in teaching first grade and their professional competence. One variable existed in the fact that the teacher using the Basal Approach had had previous experience with the materials, whereas, the teacher using the Open Court materials had not.

The degree to which the Hawthorne affect influenced the teacher using the new approach to reading could not, of course, be controlled or calculated.

Finally, the extent to which the children's attitudes

were influenced by the two programs under study was dependent upon two variables: (1) the classroom teachers themselves, and (2) the validity and reliability of the method of ranking attitudes.

#### V. ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE PAPER

The writer will review the related literature in Chapter II. In Chapter III methods of equating the groups and a detailed description of the instructional materials used in the two groups will be presented. The actual methods used in teaching the Basal and Open Court groups will be described in Chapter IV, and Chapter V will present the design and results of the study. The sixth and final chapter will contain the summary and conclusions of the completed investigation.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The field of reading traditionally had captured the interest of many of the outstanding authorities in education. This resulted in volumes of literature concerning each aspect of the reading process. Because of the abundance of information in the area, the scope of the present survey was limited to readings of immediate interest to the study at hand. This included a general introduction on the importance and nature of the reading act, a specific look at the effect of attitude upon reading, a brief résumé of the Basal Reading Program, and finally, a detailed description of a Correlated Language Arts Approach to the teaching of reading.

#### I. THE READING PROCESS

##### The Value of Reading

Throughout history, one of man's major concerns has been the communication of ideas. In a bulletin of the Alerton House Conference on Education it was reported that America's largest industry was communication---reading, writing, listening and speaking (64:1).

Of these four aspects of communication, reading was frequently considered to be the most important. According

to DeBoer, even with many great advances in modern society, technology had not yet replaced reading as a central means of communication for the literate nations. He reported that the printed page still reached millions and continued to serve unique purposes. It enabled man to link one age with every other and to perceive himself in history in relation to his total universe (14:5).

Gray and Rogers added that reading met many of the needs which newer media were not able to satisfy. They suggested that the value of reading was to be found in the fact that printed materials offered the most enlightening and varied record of human experiences available. Secondly, during the reading process it was possible to examine and study printed materials many times to extract the ultimate meaning and understanding from them. Such depth of understanding, they felt, could not be attained so easily through other media since it was not possible to pause and deliberate at will (31:8).

Tinker's list of the advantages of reading as a means of communication closely agreed with the statements made by Gray and Reese. In addition to the two main points previously mentioned, he pointed out that the use of many books could provide a great variety of information. He also felt that reading was the most efficient way of securing information, in that it was faster than talking and it reflected the thoughts of the most brilliant minds in history (65:3).

While these authorities dealt with the importance of reading in general, others concentrated upon a more specific aspect of the problem. That was, the importance of reading in the total school curriculum. McKee, for instance, felt that modern schools were primarily reading schools. In the lower grades promotion was often based on the ability to read, and in the upper grades reading was the chief means of acquiring information and expanding the student's ability to think. He also expressed the opinion that reading had always occupied a fundamental place in the curriculum, though its importance had increased greatly with the broadened sphere of application which modern life had placed upon it (44:vii).

The importance of reading in the school curriculum has been indicated in many different ways. Gates pointed out that teachers and school administrators recognized the significance of reading by the relatively large allotment of time given to the subject each school day. Likewise, those engaged in research indicated its importance in the large number of investigations conducted in the field during the last four decades (24:1).

In supporting the idea that reading was of central importance in the modern school curriculum, Gray and Reese expressed the idea that reading was ultimately linked with every other school subject. In addition to this, they felt that when steps were taken to improve the child's reading



achievement, an improvement in personal behavior usually followed. They considered the failure to learn to read as a very serious problem to the child, and one that should never be considered lightly (29:15).

McKee also stressed significance of reading in relation to success in the total school program. He investigated three main areas in which reading could affect the child's ultimate success in school and summarized his findings in the following way:

1. In terms of school work, he found that reading was a tool by which the pupil was enabled to learn much that the school had to offer.
2. He concluded that studies by Gray, Monroe, and Fleming and Woodring showed that use was made of a large number of reading abilities in various study activities, and that there was a need for teaching these important abilities to pupils for study purposes.
3. Finally, McKee surveyed the relationship between reading ability and scholastic achievement. In reviewing studies by Fretwell, Case, Dora Smith, Webb, Dickinson, Haggerty, Thompson, and Brooks he found correlations ranging from .22 to .70 between reading ability and achievement as measured by teachers' marks. Another group of studies by

Stevenson, Beard, Kelly, McKee, and Gray measured the correlation between reading ability and achievement as measured by objective tests. While some of these investigations concluded that reading was indispensable to success in school, McKee felt the correlation studies did not warrant such bold statements. He felt there was disparity among the results of the various investigations as well as a large number of relatively low correlations reported by the investigators. However, on the basis of common sense, he did conclude that it seemed reasonable to assume that the pupil who read well was more likely to succeed in school than the pupil who had not acquired many important reading abilities (44:36-45).

The preceding literature was reviewed in an attempt to illustrate the important role played by reading in the communication of ideas. The problem was brought to focus most directly upon the significance of reading in the school curriculum.

### The Nature of Reading

One of the major problems in reading instruction is found in presenting a definition of reading. Without a clear-cut concept of the nature of the reading process, it is almost impossible to plan the goals of instruction.

Without knowing what the process is, it is difficult to evaluate the reading behaviors of the pupils being trained (28:1).

In an attempt to provide a meaningful concept of the nature of reading, Spache categorized the various definitions according to their central themes. He defined reading in terms of: (1) a skill development, (2) a visual act, (3) a perceptual act, and (4) a thinking process. His framework was utilized here because it aided in dealing with the complexities of the reading process (61:1-20).

Reading as a skill development. Especially in beginning reading, emphasis is placed on the development of certain basic skills. Because of this, many authorities have defined reading in terms of the skill building processes.

Dolch, for example, found it impossible to make a single definition of reading to satisfy all persons. He, therefore, suggested three definitions to correspond to the three levels of growth in the developmental reading process. In his first definition for beginning readers, he recognized the importance of word recognition skills. He defined reading in the following way: "Reading is (1) recognizing most of the words, (2) guessing or sounding out the others, and (3) getting meaning as a result." (17:24)

Gray also described reading in terms of skill development. Spache paraphrased his account of the process of reading in these words:

The reader directs his attention to the printed page with his mind intent on meaning. He reacts to each word with a group of mental associations, regarding the word form, its meaning and its sound. With the aid of these associations, he discriminates this word from all others, also using clues of general configuration, distinctive characteristics of the shape, some of the letters of syllables, and the implications of the sense or pattern of the sentence. Thus the process begins with word recognition. (61:5-6)

The definitions of reading based on skill development did not always succeed in conveying the entire picture of the reading process. Spache suggested that in enumerating the stages and skills in the development of reading, the impression was given that these build upon each other in some sort of a sequence. This was not what actually happened; for in reality, he said, the child was taught the skills almost simultaneously. Thus, word recognition skills were interwoven into a good reading program and only offered one aspect of the complex process of learning to read (61:7).

Reading as a visual act. It is also possible to approach the definition of reading in terms of the visual act which occurs during the reading process. This encompasses a more technical aspect of reading.

In their book on a Psychology in Teaching Reading, Smith and Dechant devoted the better part of a chapter to

the visual basis of reading. They emphasized the fact that reading was a sensory process, since the reader had to react visually to the graphic symbol. Their work gave a comprehensive report on the visual processes involved in the reading act (60:120-135).

Spache described the reading process in visual terms as follows:

As the individual reads, his eyes hop or glide from one stop to the next from left to right. He does not read in a smooth sweep along the line, but only when the eyes are at rest in each fixation. ... The fixations are the heart of the visual reading act for they occupy about ninety percent of the time for reading, while interfixations and return sweeps account for the rest. (61:8)

Several significant implications of the visual processes involved in reading were also pointed out by Spache. To begin with, he stated that trying to teach children to recognize several words at each fixation by means of drill with flash cards or mechanical training devices was a waste of time. The best method for improving the child's eye span and speed of reading was through practice with natural reading materials which the child had read silently before the oral lesson. A second implication involved the degree of visual skill demanded in the reading process. The immature reader focussed and relaxed almost two hundred times per one hundred running words. The eye was forced to focus in perfect alignment over and over again, or word recognition was

inaccurate and reading became faulty. Therefore, the frequency and minuteness of the visual adjustments needed for reading implied a responsibility for developing the highest degree of visual skill in children learning to read (61:8-10).

Reading as a perceptual act. The crucial element in the reading act is the organism's meaningful response to the stimulus or written symbol. Such a response requires perception (60:23).

Perception, according to Spache, involves a preparation for a response. In reading, this included the stimulus of the printed word, the process of recognizing the word, and the operation of attributing meaning to it based on the reader's previous experience. Thus, reading was considered in its simplest form as a series of word perceptions (61:12).

The definitions of reading presented by Gates (25), Hildreth (35), and Smith and Dechant (60) were in agreement that reading involved the perception of graphic or printed symbols.

For example, Smith and Dechant defined reading as the interpretation of the printed page. In this process of interpretation, the reader related graphic symbols to his own fund of experiences. Interpretation, therefore, required both recognition and perception (60:23).

Likewise, Hildreth recognized the role of perception in the reading act in her statement that reading involved the

interpretation of graphic symbols which stood for the spoken word. Reading was, she said, a twofold process: the mechanical aspect included the physiological response in which sensations were transmitted to the brain, and in the mental process the meaning was perceived and interpreted (35:64-65).

Gates also advanced the idea that reading involved the dual task of recognizing the printed symbols and associating them with their appropriate meanings (25:1). Each of these authorities in turn, then, pointed to the role of perception in recognizing the word and attributing meaning to it.

Reading as a thinking process. Many authorities in the field of reading support the idea that reading employs the higher intellectual processes.

Fitzgerald and Fitzgerald, for instance, emphasized the cognitive aspect of reading. Reading was, they stated, a complex configuration of thought, feeling, and active organization which involved discovery, comprehension, reflection, reasoning, appreciation, analysis, evaluation, synthesis, organization and application (23:83). Betts' statement that "basically, reading is a thinking process..." gave impetus to the idea advanced by Fitzgerald and Fitzgerald (6:88).

In referring to McKee, Tinker pointed to the creative aspect of the reading process. McKee, he said, suggested that reading concerned "all of the complex mental processes involved in the interpretation of concepts and meanings aroused by the recognition of the printed symbol." Therefore, he felt that what the reader actually got from the printed page was not the exact meaning envisioned by the author. It was at this point that the act of reading became highly creative. Tinker used this example to support his concept of creating new or individual knowledge through the thinking process of reading. His own definition of reading reflected this idea:

Reading involves the recognition of printed or written symbols which serve as stimuli for the recall of meanings built up through past experiences, and the construction of new meanings through manipulation of concepts already possessed by the reader. (65:12-13)

McKillop summarized the complexities of the thinking process involved in reading in her definition:

Reading may be regarded as an individual's complex response to printed verbal symbols. It is a process as well as a product, a process by which a reader receives a communication from the writer and interprets what the writer is saying to him. The purpose for which he reads---understanding, evaluation, or knowledge---emerges as he reads and, in turn, modifies the reading itself. (46:1)

Presented here, were four major concepts of the reading process---skill development, a visual act, a type of perception, and an act involving the higher mental processes.



Reading involves all of these facets as well as others which were not explored. The purpose was to provide a perspective of reading from which the forthcoming reading programs could be viewed.

## II. THE EFFECTS OF ATTITUDE ON THE READING PROCESS

G. W. Allport wrote, "The concept of attitudes is probably the most distinct and indispensable concept in contemporary American psychology. No other term appears more frequently in experimental and theoretical research." (1:798) Thus, the importance of the concept of attitudes has been enumerated by authorities in the fields of psychology and sociology (4, 8, 3, 1). It would indeed seem that knowledge concerning attitudes would be advantageous to scholars in these and other fields where attitude could in some way affect the outcome of the research. This was true for the field of reading since attitudes were found to be related to various reading processes (46:2-3). However, a careful scrutiny of Gray's annual bibliographies (30) and Traxler's Ten Years of Research in Reading (67) revealed few investigations concerning the effect of a reader's attitudes on his reading ability, or conversely, the effect of his ability or success in reading on his attitudes.

Since the present study described the effects of a reading program on a child's attitudes toward reading, an

attempt was made to bring together available research concerning the relationships between attitude and reading. In McKillop's attitudinal study, she devised a framework for relating the affects of attitude on various reading processes, and her organization was utilized here along with frequent references to her work (46).

### Attitude Affects Perception

Perception has been shown to be an integral part of the reading process. For this reason it was important to note that many workers have documented the concept of perception as a complex function influenced by the needs and values of the perceiver. In general, the various experiments indicated that a person distorted his perception in line with his needs or attitudes (56:4).

One investigation by Postman, Bruner and McGinnies studied the effect of value on the perception of words. They found that the higher the value represented by a word, the greater the rapidity with which it was likely to be recognized. They postulated three possible complementary selective mechanisms: (1) the lowering of the stimulus threshold to acceptable stimuli, (2) the raising of the stimulus threshold to unacceptable stimuli, and (3) the perceiving of the stimulus as one which fits into the perceiver's pre-solution hypothesis. Their findings suggested

that attitudes, including value judgements, may have played an important role in the reading response, since reading involved perception of words (51:142-154).

Dobb, likewise, emphasized that perceiving depended upon a drive or a set with a person's attitude being one of the possible sets determining the kind of perceptual response he might make. Further support was given by the theory from Gestalt Psychology that paying attention and perceiving occurred as a result of an individual's attitudes or his set to respond (18:139).

The opposite side of this relationship was presented by Dobb in his statement that the learning, retention and decline of an attitude involved problems of perception and motivation. An individual responded because he had paid attention to certain stimuli which had affected his sense organs and thus evoked his attitude (18:136-139). Sherif and Cantril also found the first stage in the actual formation of an attitude to be a perceptual state. Therefore, they stated, the psychology of attitudes was related to the psychology of perception (57:19-20).

It seems, then, that reading, perception and attitude are closely interrelated, with each exerting an influence upon the others.

### Attitude Affects Learning

The learning of verbal material, another process involved in reading, has also shown to be affected under certain conditions by attitude. In support of this theory, McKillop referred to the research on perception and memory performed by Bartlett. In his study, he concluded that attitudes which sprang up upon a basis of weakly defined perceptual patterns may have strongly influenced recall and may have tended to produce stereotyped reproductions which adequately served normal needs. This tendency to reproduce stereotype responses based upon the individual's attitude may have been one effect of attitude upon learning (46:5).

McKillop also summarized the three possible effects of attitude upon learning which emerged from the works of Edwards, Levine, and Murphy. First, she concluded, material which was in harmony with the subject's attitudes was more easily learned and better retained than material which was contrary to the attitude possessed by the reader. Second, attitude may have had an effect on accurate recognition and reproduction; and finally, experiences which were in conflict with the reader's attitudes may have been distorted to fit in with his existing sets (46:7-8).

Betts' conclusions about the relatedness of attitudes to thinking and learning complemented these previous findings.

He made the following points:

1. How a reader interprets a section depends upon what he takes to it of information, of techniques of inquiry, and of attitudes.
  - A. Unfavorable attitudes tend to contribute to inaccurate interpretation and to interfere with comprehension.
  - B. Ideas in harmony with the learner's attitude are more easily learned.
  - C. Ideas contrary to attitudes contribute to confusion and irritation.
  - D. The stronger the attitude, the more it influences interpretation.
2. Attitudes influence recall of ideas.
  - A. Ideas in harmony with the learner's attitudes are more likely to be recalled than those in conflict.
  - B. Vividness of recall depends upon the strength of the attitude. (6:90-91)

The effects of attitude upon learning and recall were similar to the effects of attitude upon perception. This was to be expected, McKillop stated, since there appeared to be a functional continuity between perception and learning (46:8).

#### Attitude Affects Reasoning and Judgement

Reading has been shown to be a complex response involving the higher intellectual processes. This must include an emphasis on reasoning and judgement as essential skills in reading, and several investigations have found that these skills are influenced by a reader's attitude.

McKillop's study, for instance, concluded that on questions of judgement, evaluation, and prediction the relationship between attitude and response to the reading passage was quite evident (46). Further proof of this was provided by Lefford's study on logical thinking. He found that the subjects were able to solve neutral problems best, and that strong feelings influenced reasoning in the direction of the subject's convictions (42:127-151). Although McCaul's investigation was inconclusive, some evidence showed that pupils' attitudes affected interpretation of materials by shaping the motives they ascribed to persons about whom they read. In addition to this, McCaul pointed out that both sex and age influenced the degree to which attitude affected interpretation. Boys' reading interpretations were found to be influenced to a greater extent by attitude than were the girls' (43:454-456). Betts, as well as McCaul, advanced the idea that the older the child, the more his interpretation was influenced by his attitude (6:90-91).

Therefore, to the extent that reading involves making judgements, evaluations, and predictions, and includes thinking logically and interpreting printed materials, it may be expected to be influenced by attitude.

### Attitude Affects Reading

Inasmuch as reading was found to involve perception, learning, reasoning and judgement, it seemed reasonable that attitude may have been an important determiner of the reading success.

In his attitudinal study, Groff found three existing relationships which substantiated this apparent association between a reader's attitude and his response to printed material. He concluded that: (1) a significant positive correlation existed between attitude toward the content materials and critical reading test scores, (2) a positive relationship was found between reading ability and attitude toward reading, and (3) a student's attitude toward the content of the materials read positively influenced his reading comprehension (32:314-18).

In Witty's study of one hundred poor readers, he found that eighty-two of the low readers showed a lack of reading interest; and, of these, forty-three actually disliked reading. Other than this lack of interest, he found few reasons for poor reading (68:507-13).

Murphy and Likert studied still a different view of the relationship between reading and attitude. They investigated the ways in which the function of reading modified or changed attitudes. Reading was found to be an indirect means of experiencing by which attitudes were learned (49).

Allport also generalized about ways in which experiences influenced the growth of attitudes. He stated that attitudes were built through an accumulation of experiences in which numerous specific responses of a similar type were integrated. Attitudes, therefore, were products of all experiences that were relevant to a certain issue (1:810-814).

Despite the apparent agreement between these investigations, it was pointed out by Sherif and Cantril that the attitude studies did not all present a unified picture because different investigators approached the subject with different points of view. They noted how Nelson had cited twenty-three distinct characterizations given to the term "attitude" (56:299-300). This general confusion in the study of attitudes was indicated as early as 1928 by Bain, a pioneer in organizing the literature on attitudes (3:156-157). Another important figure, G. W. Allport, illustrated this lack of unification in his history on the concept of attitudes (1:CH.17). Even in research performed in the past two decades, many of the attitude studies have been inconclusive. For example, McKillop pointed to the research conducted by Crossen and McCaul as providing few statistically significant conclusions about the direct relationship between attitude and the reader's response (46:11).

In an attempt to account for the inconsistent findings in attitudinal research, McKillop postulated the



following explanation. Any specific response is the product of the interaction of general reading skills, experiences, and attitudes. It may be expected, then, that for questions concerning specific details, general reading skills may be the dominant factor in determining the response. For questions which require the reader to make inferences, however, his past experiences and general information may become more important. Finally, for the complex task of evaluation, attitudes and values may become the dominant factors in shaping the reader's response. The results of her study substantiated this general hypothesis (46:11-12).

Even with some confusion over inconclusive results, in general, attitude research has shown that a relationship does exist between the processes of reading---perception, learning, reasoning and judgement---and the attitude of the reader. It has not been proven whether it is reading ability which influences attitudes or the existing attitudes which affect the ability to read, but a relationship is evident. It was not the purpose of this study to deal with this debated question, but to determine whether a reading program which stimulated higher reading achievement would also promote a more positive attitude toward reading.

### III. TWO APPROACHES TO TEACHING READING

Traditionally, the reading program in our elementary schools has been centered around a set of basal textbooks through which the basic reading skills have been taught. In recent years, however, many programs which greatly differed from this approach have been introduced and tested. In the Correlated Language Arts Program, for instance, reading, writing, language development, and spelling skills were integrally related and presented in a program which varied from a traditional approach. Therefore, literature on both reading programs has been examined to provide greater insight for the present investigation.

#### The Basal Reading Program

Cutts cited that probably the most accepted approach to reading was a program centered around basal readers (12:73-74). These materials were also considered to be of sufficient importance by Bond and Wagner to constitute the core of all reading activities (7:100).

Such a Basal Reading Program, Dechant indicated, consisted of a set of graded reading books designed to provide continuity in reading development and sequential training in all the basic skills (16:200). To this definition, Betts added that in many schools more than one series of readers were sometimes used, with one set being adopted for basal use

and one or more being used as supplementary readers. In many instances, the children were grouped according to their reading abilities for direct instruction in basal texts (4:488). Although a few slight differences such as these were pointed out, most authorities seemed to agree that the chief consideration in a Basal Reading Program was the systematic development of reading ability by means of a series of reading lessons graded in difficulty (4,11,19,7).

The purpose of the Basal Program, Gates reported, was to pave the way by providing the foundation and incentive for much wider, more enjoyable reading than would otherwise be possible. It was designed to free the teacher of much of the work that she would otherwise have to do, so that she could give more attention to the proper selection of supplemental reading materials and proper guidance of children in their total reading programs (26:488).

General procedures for utilizing a Basal Program have been outlined by many reading authorities. McKee believed that the program for elementary schools could be divided into four periods of training: (1) the period of preparation for elementary school, (2) the period of beginning instruction in reading, (3) the period of rapid progress in fundamental reading habits and abilities, and (4) the period of wide reading (41:236). Within each designated period, reading lessons were to be guided by certain basic

principles. These were summarized by Betts in the following manner:

1. Groups should be prepared for reading the story.
2. The first reading should be guided silent reading.
3. The word-recognition and comprehension skills should be developed during silent reading.
4. The rereading of the story---silent or oral---should be done for purposes different from those served by the first silent reading.
5. The follow-up should be differentiated according to student needs. (4:492)

In addition to these rules which were set down, Bond and Wagner cautioned that the grade designation of a book indicated its place in the developmental sequence of reading instruction and not a standard that all children were expected to achieve over a given period of time. Children should progress through the learning experiences provided by the Basal series at their own speed, since the task was not to get through the material quickly, but to provide instruction in reading (7:100).

The advantages and disadvantages of the Basal Reading Program have been debated by many authorities. General agreement over the following aspects of the program were found between the works of Cutts (12:74-75), Durrell (21:22), and Bond and Wagner (7:100).

1. Basal Programs provide sequential organization which minimizes the possibility of instructional gaps.
2. They offer the orderly introduction and practice necessary for the development of a common sight vocabulary and perceptual abilities.

3. They save the teacher time in preparation of materials.
4. The accompanying manuals give helpful suggestions for teaching and adapting the materials to the needs of the pupils.

Dolch (17:321-322), Betts (4:489), and Hildreth (35:33) summarized the physical qualities of the basal materials. They agreed that the following features constituted advantages of the basal materials:

1. Manufacturing processes have been improved, and this has resulted in more legible type and more attractive illustrations.
2. The authors of the books are knowledgeable of children's interests, vocabulary, development, and their use of language structure.
3. Coordinated supplementary materials and work-books are provided for each reader unit with self-checking exercises for extended practice.

The major disadvantages of the Basal Approach to reading were not found in the program itself, but in the misuses of the series by classroom teachers. Too many teachers, Cutts pointed out, assigned all pupils to the same book or tried to fit them all to the same instructional level. Still others were guilty of using the same book for all children and merely modifying assignments and pace for the students of lesser capability (12:74). Basal readers were intended to assist the teacher in guiding the children's reading instruction, and they were useful, Durrell emphasized, only if they were used with imagination and good judgement (21:v).

Although basal readers did seem to offer sequential training in word attack skills, in 1964 Spache summarized the following misuses of the program:

The program is sometimes introduced too late, divorced from its functional application to the act of reading, poorly related to the relevant research, dictated by the vagaries of the basal author's beliefs, and finally, taught by teachers who are woefully weak in their understanding and personal practice of good word attack skills.

Because of these problems inherent in the Basal Program, Spache concluded that the need for some new approach to reading seemed to be indicated (61:87).

#### A Correlated Language Arts Program

Voices of dissatisfaction over traditional methods of teaching language skills were heard long before the 1960's. As early as 1940 Betts delineated the grievances of educational practices which emphasized regimentation and departmentalization. Under such a program, he stated, pupil achievement had not measured up to set goals, and nonpromotion had exceeded far beyond expectation. He also noted that pupil attitude toward school and the use of language had been less than desirable, and that the need for remedial or corrective education had been disproportionately high (5:220-7).

Throughout the thirties and forties, Artley reported that a transition from compartmentalized subject matter areas

of reading, writing, spelling and composition to an integrated program for teaching the communication skills was evident. The movement grew out of a greater understanding of the psychology of language as well as the psychology of child growth and development. It resulted in a change of philosophy away from mechanics and correctness to an emphasis on expression and creativity. She concluded that the Language Arts possessed similar heritage, common purpose, and inherent unity, with each contributing to the growth of the others (2:527-8).

In the light of similar findings, the 1954 Conference on Research in English suggested that there should be a greater integration in the teaching of the language arts. Organized techniques to capitalize on the inherent unity between the areas of communication were needed to facilitate the maximum growth of all the language areas (37:3).

Noting the trend toward unification, in 1948 Hildreth pointed out four advantages of an integrated Language Arts Program. These she listed as: (1) the prevention of duplication, with the saving of time in the daily schedule, (2) the reinforcement for learning that comes from tying all phases of language with meaningful ideas and childish interests, (3) the freeing of time in the daily schedule for study projects through which linguistic skills could be developed, and (4) the prevention of reading failure (34:545).

Principles to guide an integrated Language Arts Program were set down by Serviss during the same decade. His report was an outcome of a group study of the Language Arts Program. The following guidelines were formulated:

1. Language is conceived not as an end in itself but as an important element in promoting children's mental health.
  2. It is essential to create an atmosphere in which children feel free to express themselves as individuals.
  3. The child must have the opportunity for continuous growth through stimulating oral and written expression, art, and dramatization.
  4. Richness in expression depends fundamentally upon richness of experience. A teacher must develop a rich experience background in the children she teaches.
  5. Children must be assisted in becoming sensitive to their environment.
  6. Skill in use of language comes through varied opportunities for expression.
  7. Specific objectives must arise from the needs of the children.
  8. Language embraces all fields in which children utilize reading and oral and written expression.
- (55:32)

Many Language Arts Programs have been proposed during the past four decades. Hatfield (33), Dora Smith (59), Strickland (62), Hovious (36), and many others have described programs in which the interrelations between the language skills were emphasized. Gray and Reese suggested that a good example of correlating the study of the Language Arts was provided by the French. With their basic goal of increasing the ability to think, the French educators planned reading



lessons which provided for the integration of the basic language skills. This method, they concluded, could be adapted to American use quite profitably (29:16-20).

An approach which capitalized on the interrelations between the Language Arts, however, must be based on evidence that such a relationship does exist. Betts suggested that a review of language development helped to establish this connectedness between the various language skills. He believed that language development took place in the following orderly sequence:

1. In the first stage the child learns about the existence of concrete objects through the use of his senses. This is a prerequisite for language since experience is the basis of meaning which contributes to language needs.
2. The second stage is reached when the child differentiates speech which has been directed toward him. This stage produces intelligent listening and responding to speech sounds.
3. During the third stage of development, the child learns to use speech in communicating with others. Thus, he begins to talk. He acquires considerable oral language facility to deal with his experiences.
4. The fourth stage of language development initiates the child into more abstract means of communication---namely, visual symbols which stand for the oral speech sounds. In learning to read, then, he finds that meaning exists between printed symbols and experiences.
5. The fifth stage introduces the use of visual symbols for communicating with others. The child is now not only concerned with interpretation of written symbols, but also with the use of these symbols to express his thoughts, feelings, and emotions. He therefore, develops some control over writing.

6. The final stage involves a refinement of the child's language control. This is achieved through maturation and experience. This stage, therefore, is a continuation of language development based on previously acquired fundamental skills. (5:13-15)

In addition to the relationship evidenced by the logical development of the language skills, experimental research has also substantiated correlations between the various language areas. Because of the present study's emphasis on the reading program in a correlated Language Arts curriculum, it was necessary to review the relationships between reading and the other skills of listening, speaking, spelling and written composition.

Relationship between reading and listening. Listening was considered to be a chief mode of learning in the early school years during which a child learned to read. Recognizing the importance of listening in the early stages of reading, many investigations explored the relationship between these two skills. Reviews of the significant findings were made by Beery (37), Artley (2), and Hildreth (34).

Reporting for the National Conference on Research in English, Beery suggested that certain fundamental elements were common to listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These included vocabulary, sentence patterns, and organization of ideas. Reading, speaking, and writing were also related to listening in one other important way---instruction

in each area was usually given orally. He cited Wilt's study which found that children were expected to listen in school on an average of two and a half hours each day. For those children who were slow in learning to read, listening played an even more important role. Research by Anderson, Goldstein, and Larsen and Feder showed that the lower the reading ability the greater was the advantage of listening as a mode for learning (37:36-38).

Beery (37), Artley (2), and Hildreth (34) all found that a significant relationship existed between reading comprehension and comprehension of the spoken word. Artley cited that James Brown, Goldstein, Larsen and Feder, Gates, and Nichols all reported positive correlations between these two variables. This correlation was found to be the highest in the elementary grades (2:531-2). Similar investigations reviewed by Beery reported correlations ranging from .60 to .82 (37:38). Hildreth summarized that many supposed reading difficulties often turned out to be language deficiencies. On the basis of Young's study, she concluded that an intimate relationship existed between reading and hearing comprehension (34:540).

Other relationships between reading and listening were also reviewed by Beery. Studies by Schonell and by Bond, for instance, concluded that weakness in auditory discrimination of speech sounds was one of the most important and most

frequent causal factors in poor reading. The reverse of this cognation was investigated by Gates. He found that the ability to listen to a story and supply a reasonable ending was the best single predictor of success in reading (37:38). Thus, reading and listening were found to be inter-related in several significant ways.

Relationship between reading and speaking. According to Dawson, facility in speaking is a prerequisite to learning to read, and therefore is part of the foundation of reading. The beginning reader most easily learns words familiar to him through first hand experiences and which are already a part of his oral speech. Until the child acquires a large speaking vocabulary, enunciates clearly, talks in sentences, and speaks and thinks sequentially, he will have a difficult time learning to read with comprehension and ease. On the other hand, Dawson pointed out, reading activities also facilitate oral communication by adding new words to the child's speaking vocabulary and by introducing him to a variety of sentence forms and correct language usage (37:33).

Since reading is a process of interpreting printed symbols that are based on speech sounds, Hildreth agreed that reading relies on a foundation of previously learned speech symbols. As an example of a beginning reader's dependence on a broad meaning vocabulary, she cited Goode-nough's study which found a correlation of .79 between the

ability to understand the explain meanings of words and reading achievement (34:539).

In addition to these findings, Artley indicated that studies by Hughes, Lorge, and Marion Monro all supported a close relationship between reading comprehension and word knowledge. Reading achievement, he summarized, was conditioned by the extent to which one had achieved growth in general language ability (2:528-9).

A remedial approach proposed by Buckingham seemed also to be based on this supposition that reading was closely correlated with language ability. He suggested that many pupils who seemed deficient in reading were actually weak in general language ability. Therefore, attention should be given to the whole task of learning the symbolism of communication (37:13).

Because speech defects can affect a child's general language ability, investigators have tried to find if a relationship existed between speech difficulties and reading. Although some authorities indicated a positive correlation between these two variables, Artley suggested that there was a lack of general agreement among the studies (2:528-9). Both He and Hildreth (34:540) concluded that speech defects may have been either the cause or the result of reading defects.

It was found, then, that a basic meaning vocabulary

and a facility in oral speech were necessary for normal growth in reading. Factors which interfered with the child's general language ability were usually found to also have some effect on the reading process.

Relationship between reading and spelling. In his description of the sequence of language development, Betts suggested that reading and spelling abilities were correlative growths. He cited experimental evidence which showed that both skills depended on intelligence, auditory perception, visual perception, and a meaning vocabulary (5:13-14). Hildreth added that both spelling and word recognition in reading required study. In addition to these common features, she found that generalizations about word form and word building which were learned in reading were the same as those needed in spelling (34:540). Gates also suggested that visual perception, phonic abilities, and habits of writing were factors in reading and spelling alike (27).

Although many investigators such as Hughes, Russel, Peake, Spache, Townsend, and Tyler indicated that spelling ability was related to the level of comprehension in reading and to the rise of a meaning vocabulary, Artley summarized that there was a lack of agreement as to the extent of the correlation. Even with some confusion over the varying degree of the results, all of the studies surveyed indicated that the correlation between spelling and reading was

positive (2). Townsend, likewise, found a substantial positive correlation on the basis of the test used, between scores in spelling and reading comprehension and vocabulary. The correlation between spelling and vocabulary, however, was higher than that between spelling and reading comprehension (66). A more general study of post elementary students was conducted by Gilbert and Gilbert. Their conclusion that mature, superior spellers at the college level definitely gained in spelling ability through their reading, as evidenced by spelling tests and eye-movement records, also supported the relationship between reading and spelling (28).

A general positive correlation between spelling and reading was also indicated by Hildreth in her review of Language Arts research. Peake, for example, found a .80 - .85 positive correlation between scores on reading and spelling tests. Other studies indicated that good reading and spelling went together---with the converse being true that poor readers were usually poor spellers. A further investigation by Osborn concluded that poor readers had not yet learned the relationship between the sounds and the symbols that represented them (34:540).

In a summary of over one hundred forty studies with implications for possible causes of spelling disability, Spache suggested that vocabulary knowledge was even a more significant determinant of spelling success than was

intelligence (61). Both Russell (52) and Townsend (66) agreed that in good spelling, intelligence was not as great a factor as vocabulary, word recognition, and perceptual speed.

Even though the studies varied in the degree of correlation between reading and spelling, in general, they all indicated a positive relationship between these two language skills.

Relationship between reading and written composition.

In the final stages of language development, the child acquires the use of visual symbols for communication with others (4:14-15). Thus, written composition is ordinarily the last form of language communication to be taught in school. It logically comes last in the sequence of development since it is dependent on oral language and comprehension, is allocated with skill in reading, and is related to growth in spelling and handwriting (37:4).

In his review of research, Artley also found this common core of general language abilities to underlie written skills (2:532). Both Russell (52) and Townsend (66) supported a high correlation between general language skills and ability in written composition.

In view of the evidence of a correlation between writing, reading, and the other language skills, the Conference



on Research in English supported a newer experience approach for teaching a child to communicate through writing. The program they suggested was a functional one in which language was considered a tool for use in life activities rather than a separate school subject. Pupils learned to write as the need for written expression arose. They felt that when written expression was tied in with all other phases of language it resulted in learning which was far more meaningful (37:5).

Thus, research has evidenced that written composition is related to skill in reading as well as facility in the other language arts.

General relationship between reading and the other language arts. The preceding literature has shown how reading was specifically related to the language skills of listening, speaking, spelling and writing. Artley helped to summarize the significant findings in the following way:

1. Studies of child growth and development have shown an orderly and systematic development of all language abilities. This may have accounted for some of the relationships among the various skills.
2. The language skills are related through symbolic representations, meaning, and language structure.
3. Progress in acquisition of all language skills and abilities is greatest in a rich language environment which provides stimulation and guidance.

(2:532)

The present review of literature provided a background from which the programs under investigation could be viewed. It was designed to develop an understanding of the nature and value of the reading process and to show the relationships between reading and the reader's attitudes. Finally, literature on the Basal Reading Program and the correlation between the Language Arts was summarized to provide a background of information for the study. Since the Open Court Program was founded on the basis of such a correlation, this was considered an important part of the study.

## CHAPTER III

### GROUPS STUDIED AND MATERIALS USED

The study described two traditional first grade classes during the 1968-69 school year. Because all of the students were from the same geographical area, it was presumed that both groups were comprised of children from a middle class socio-economic background. Few social extremes were found within the prescribed area.

#### I. EQUATING THE GROUPS

Since only one Open Court classroom was initiated in the 1968-69 school year in the Lake Washington School District, the scope of the study was necessarily limited to one group using the Open Court Reading Program and one group using a Basal Method of instruction. A method of matched pairs on the basis of the Gates-MacGintie Reading Test, the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test, and the sex of the students was used in equating and reporting the results.

The students in both groups were given the Gates-MacGintie Primary A Test - Form 1 during the first part of November, 1968. Scores were obtained for both vocabulary and comprehension. At this time each student was given a code letter which was used throughout the study.

By arranging the raw scores on the vocabulary test from high to low, a rank score was assigned to each student. If two or more students made the same score, they were assigned the same average rank. The range of these scores and the rank assigned to each student are shown in Table I (page 45). The results of the vocabulary test produced raw scores ranging from 33 to 6 with a median score of 19. Translated into grade scores this gave a range from 1.8, or first grade eighth month, to scores below 1.3. The median grade score was 1.4, or first grade fourth month.

The same procedure was followed for the comprehension scores obtained from the Gates-MacGintie Primary Test. The results produced raw scores ranging from 19 to 2 with a median score of 10. The equivalent grade scores ranged from 1.7 to 1.2 with a median grade score of 1.3. This information is shown in Table II (page 46).

The Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test was given in May of 1968. Again, the scores for the two classes were arranged from high to low, and rank scores were assigned. The scores on this test ranged from 82 to 29 with a median score of 61. The results of this test are shown in Table III (page 47).

The rank scores obtained on the three individual tests were then added to obtain a total rank score. The student with the lowest total rank score was considered to be the most

TABLE I  
DISTRIBUTION OF VOCABULARY SCORES ON THE  
GATES-MACGINTIE PRIMARY A TEST - FORM 1

Basal Group	Vocabulary Raw Scores	Rank Scores	Open Court Group	Vocabulary Raw Scores	Rank Scores
A	31	2.5	AA	33	1
B	31	2.5	AB	29	4.5
C	29	4.5	AC	27	6
D	25	7.5	AD	25	7.5
E	22	13.5	AE	24	9.5
F	22	13.5	AF	24	9.5
G	21	17	AG	22	13.5
H	20	20	AH	22	13.5
I	20	20	AI	22	13.5
J	19	24	AJ	22	13.5
K	18	27	AK	20	20
L	18	27	AL	20	20
M	17	29.5	AM	20	20
N	16	32	AN	19	24
O	16	32	AO	19	24
P	16	32	AP	18	27
Q	14	34	AQ	17	29.5
R	13	36	AR	13	36
S	13	36	AS	12	38
T	11	40	AT	11	40
U	11	40	AU	9	42.5
V	8	44.5	AV	9	42.5
			AW	8	44.5
			AX	6	46

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION OF COMPREHENSION SCORES ON THE  
GATES-MACGINTIE PRIMARY A TEST - FORM 1

Basal Group	Comp. Raw Scores	Rank Scores	Open Court Group	Comp. Raw Scores	Rank Scores
B	19	1	AB	17	2
R	16	3	AM	14	4.5
D	13	7	AF	14	4.5
E	12	12	AK	13	7
A	12	12	AN	13	7
P	12	12	AI	12	12
C	11	18	AJ	12	12
F	11	18	AQ	12	12
Q	11	18	AU	12	12
T	11	18	AV	11	18
L	10	22.5	AE	10	22.5
G	9	26.5	AP	10	22.5
H	9	26.5	AT	10	22.5
I	7	35.5	AD	9	26.5
J	7	35.5	AG	9	26.5
K	7	35.5	AL	8	30.5
M	7	35.5	AO	8	30.5
N	7	35.5	AR	8	30.5
U	6	41	AX	8	30.5
V	6	41	AA	7	35.5
S	6	41	AW	6	41
O	2	46	AH	6	41
			AC	5	44
			AS	4	45

TABLE III  
DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES ON THE METROPOLITAN  
READING READINESS TEST

Basal Group	Raw Scores	Rank Scores	Open Court Group	Raw Scores	Rank Scores
E	78	4.5	AD	82	1
F	77	6	AA	80	2.5
G	75	7.5	AL	80	2.5
J	72	9	AJ	78	4.5
H	70	11.5	AE	75	7.5
C	69	13.5	AN	71	10
B	67	16	AH	70	11.5
D	67	16	AG	69	13.5
A	65	18.5	AM	27	16
I	61	24	AC	65	18.5
M	61	24	AQ	64	20.5
N	60	26.5	AO	64	20.5
V	60	26.5	AB	63	22
K	58	29.5	AI	61	24
Q	58	29.5	AF	58	29.5
R	56	34.5	AK	58	29.5
O	56	34.5	AR	57	32.5
U	54	36.5	AW	57	32.5
P	53	38	AS	54	36.5
L	51	39.5	AT	51	39.5
T	49	41	AV	48	42
S	39	45	AP	45	43
			AX	43	44
			AU	29	46

capable student and the student with the highest total rank was considered to be the least capable. If two students earned the same total rank, they were classified as having equal ability. The ranking of students in the two groups from high to low is shown in Table IV (page 49).

The two groups were then matched by pairing a child from one group with a child with a nearly equal total rank score from the other group. Consideration was given to the individual rank scores on the three tests so that each pair had approximately equal ranks in vocabulary, comprehension, and reading readiness. Pairs were also matched according to sex, with boys being matched with boys and girls with girls.

Upon completion of the pairing, there were fifteen students in each group. This included eight girls and seven boys. Table V (page 50) shows the matching of the fifteen pairs based on the three individual rank scores, the total rank scores, and sex.

The total rank scores of the Basal group ranged from 30 to 122 with a mean of 79.0. The Open Court group ranged from 30 to 120.5 with a mean of 80. This indicated that the general reading ability of the two groups, based on the tests used, was equal.

Vocabulary rank scores for the Basal group ranged from 2.5 to 44.5 with a mean of 26.3; whereas the Open Court group ranged from 4.5 to 46 with a mean score of 27.6. The



TABLE IV

COMPUTATION OF TOTAL RANK SCORES WITH ARRANGEMENT  
OF STUDENTS FROM MOST CAPABLE TO LEAST CAPABLE

Basal Group	Voc. Rank	Comp. Rank	Metro. Rank	Total Rank	Open Court Group	Voc. Rank	Comp. Rank	Metro Rank	Total Rank
B	2.5	1	16	19.5	AB	4.5	2	22	28.5
E	13.5	12	4.5	30	AJ	13.5	12	4.5	30
D	7.5	7	16	30.5	AD	7.5	26.5	1	35
A	2.5	12	18.5	33	AA	1	35.5	2.5	39
C	4.5	18	13.5	36	AE	9.5	22.5	7.5	39.5
F	13.5	18	6	37.5	AM	20	4.5	16	40.5
G	17	26.5	7.5	51	AN	24	7	10	41
H	20	26.5	11.5	58	AF	9.5	4.5	29.5	43.5
J	24	35.5	9	68.5	AI	13.5	12	24	49.5
R	36	3	34.5	73.5	AL	20	30.5	2.5	53
I	20	35.5	24	79.5	AG	13.5	26.5	13.5	53.5
Q	34	18	29.5	81.5	AK	20	7	29.5	56.5
P	32	12	38	82	AQ	39.5	12	20.5	62
L	27	22.5	39.5	89	AH	13.5	41	11.5	66
M	29.5	35.5	24	89	AC	6	44	18.5	68.5
K	27	35.5	29.5	92	AO	24	30.5	20.5	75
N	32	35.5	26.5	94	AP	27	22.5	43	92.5
T	40	18	41	99	AR	36	30.5	32.5	99
V	44.5	41	26.5	112	AU	42.5	12	46	100.5
O	32	46	34.5	112.5	AT	40	22.5	39.5	102
U	40	41	36.5	117.5	AV	42.5	18	42	102.5
S	36	41	45	122	AW	44.5	41	32.5	118
					AS	38	45	36.5	119.5
					AX	46	30.5	44	120.5

TABLE V

COMPARISON OF TOTAL RANK SCORES OF THE BASAL AND OPEN COURT MATCHED PAIRS

Pairs	Sex	Basal Group	Voc. Rank	Comp. Rank	Metro. Rank	Total Rank	Open Court Group	Voc. Rank	Comp. Rank	Metro. Rank	Total Rank
1	F	E	13.5	12	4.5	30	AJ	13.5	12	4.5	30
2	M	A	2.5	12	18.5	33	AB	4.5	2	22	28.5
3	F	F	13.5	18	6	37.5	AE	9.5	22.5	7.5	39.5
4	F	G	17	26.5	7.5	51	AG	13.5	26.5	13.5	53.5
5	F	H	20	26.5	11.5	58	AL	20	30.5	2.5	53
6	F	J	24	35.5	9	68.5	AH	13.5	41	11.5	66
7	F	I	20	35.5	24	79.5	AO	24	30.5	20.5	75
8	M	P	32	12	38	82	AU	42.5	12	46	100.5
9	M	L	27	22.5	39.5	89	AP	27	22.5	43	92.5
10	M	N	32	35.5	26.5	94	AR	36	30.5	32.5	99
11	F	T	40	18	41	99	AV	42.5	18	42	102.5
12	M	V	44.5	41	26.5	112	AW	44.5	41	32.5	118
13	M	O	32	46	34.5	112.5	AT	40	22.5	39.5	102
14	M	U	40	41	36.5	117.5	AS	38	45	36.5	119.5
15	F	S	36	41	45	122	AX	46	30.5	44	120.5
			M=26.3	M=28.2	M=24.6	M=79.0		M=27.6	M=25.8	M=26.5	M=80.0

difference in the mean scores of 1.3 indicated the groups were of approximately equal vocabulary ability with the Basal group being just slightly stronger.

The Basal group ranged from 12 to 46 in comprehension rank scores with a mean of 28.2. A range from 2 to 41 was obtained for the Open Court group with a mean of 25.8. The difference in mean scores of 2.4 indicated that the Open Court group ranked slightly stronger in comprehension ability as shown by the Gates-MacGintie Primary A Test.

Finally, the rank scores from the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test ranged from 4.5 to 45 for the Basal group with a mean of 24.6. The scores for the Open Court group ranged from 2.5 to 46 with a mean of 26.5. The difference of 1.9 indicated that the two groups were also approximately equal in reading readiness skills.

Therefore, the two groups were shown to be equated according to ranks in vocabulary, comprehension, and reading readiness skills as well as in total rank scores.

## II. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS USED

The Basal group. The Scott Foresman and Ginn basal materials were used with the Basal group. This included preprimers, junior primers, primers, and first readers. Since there existed a range in reading potential according to the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test, the group was

divided into three reading sections for instruction.

The section with the highest ability used the first, second, and third Ginn preprimers; the Scott Foresman third preprimer, primer, and first reader; as well as first and second enrichment readers from Macmillan in their Basal Reading Program. The program and exercises suggested in the teacher manuals were followed.

The middle or second section utilized the three Ginn preprimers, as well as the Scott Foresman third preprimer, junior primer, primer, and first reader in their Basal Program. This was supplemented by the three Macmillan preprimers, the Lippencott primer, and the Ginn primer and primer supplement.

The third section with the lowest ability read from the first Ginn preprimer, the second and third Scott Foresman preprimers, the Scott Foresman primer, and the Ginn primer in their Basal Reading Program.

In addition to these basal materials, other supplemental readers as well as trade books from the school library were on hand for the children's use.

The Open Court group. The Correlated Language Arts Program published by Open Court had three main divisions.

The first part, or the Foundation Program, included two basic reader workbooks and six short supplementary story-

books, all of which were soft-bound. The first reader-workbook, Learning to Read and Write (referred to as the Blue Book), contained twenty-four lessons and was used from the first week of school. The second, Reading and Writing (referred to as the Gold Book), followed immediately and contained thirty-one lessons. Each book was a writing book as well as a reader-workbook. An important part of the foundation program was a Workshop Kit. It provided materials for individual learning which each child used independently. This included a number of teaching aids, such as the wall sound cards, the sound flash cards, and the phonograph records for pronouncing the sounds.

The second part of the program consisted of the hard-cover reader, Reading is Fun. It was designed to be used during the second half of grade one and included literary selections as well as a wide range of informational reading.

The third main division of the Open Court Materials consisted of the Teachers' Guides for the readers. The two guides provided correlated lessons in speaking, listening, composition, spelling, grammar, usage, capitalization, and pronunciation.

To accompany the basic Open Court materials designed for the first and second halves of grade one, a Word Line Book was provided to introduce vocabulary and to teach blending.

The classroom teacher supplemented these Open Court materials with basal readers published by Ginn, Scott Foresman, and Singer. SRA materials were also used to enrich the program of the more advanced readers. The students did not receive direct instruction from these materials, but had them available for independent use. Trade books from the school library were also used to enrich the reading program.

## CHAPTER IV

### METHODS OF TEACHING READING

#### I. BASAL GROUP

The reading instruction of the Basal group was directed by the manuals of the Ginn and Scott Foresman Basal Reading Programs. Because a wide range in reading potential was indicated by the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test, the group was divided into three sections for reading instruction.

The first section with the highest ability was composed of nine girls and two boys. The second, or middle section, included two girls and four boys; and the third, or low ability section, included one girl and four boys.

Approximately two hours each day were devoted to reading activities. This included a 10 to 15 minute introduction during which directions for the day's work were given, and three 25 minute periods during which the sections rotated between direct basal reading instruction, follow-up seat work, and independent reading and phonic activities. In addition to this Basal Program, three 20 to 30 minute periods each week were devoted to direct phonic instruction. During these periods the class worked as a whole. Three afternoons a week a 15 to 20 minute period was spent in independent reading from supplementary reading materials.

The daily lessons in the Basal Reading Program usually followed a general format. This included motivation for the story or work, direct vocabulary instruction, guided silent and/or oral reading, associated skill work, and follow-up seat work activities. The teacher followed the specific directions given in the manuals of the Basal Programs which the three sections were using.

## II. OPEN COURT GROUP

The reading instruction of the Open Court group was directed by the manuals of the Open Court Correlated Language Arts Program. Because the program was designed to present the Language Arts as a totally integrated subject, the class received reading instruction as a whole.

Instruction was basically divided into two different teaching segments or units of time. The first unit of work included the Foundation Program which was designed for use during the first half of first grade. The second part of the program, the hard-covered 1.2 reader, provided lessons for use during the second semester of first grade.

### The Foundation Program

The Foundation Program provided for a three stage development of skills needed for independent reading in the first semester of first grade. The basic approach was multi-



sensory in which the children were involved in seeing, saying, hearing, and writing activities.

First Stage. The first stage of the Foundation Program, or lessons 1-6, involved ten Get Acquainted Sessions devoted to listening skills, letter-name skills, and writing skills. The class utilized the chalkboard and materials from the Open Court Workshop Kit. This stage of the program was presented during the first two weeks of school.

Second Stage. The second stage began the third week of class and was directed by the guide for lessons 7-24. It introduced sounds and blending techniques, dictation skills, and simple stories and poems composed of the sounds taught in each specific lesson. The basic materials utilized in this part of the program were the Blue Book and two story-books with coordinated vocabulary.

At this point of the program a regular teaching procedure was established for lessons 7-24. Each lesson was usually designed to be taught over a two-day period. The first day's plan took the following format:

1. New letters, sounds, and sample words. The first part of each lesson introduced and provided practice on new letters, sounds, and words.
2. Response card practice. The children received extra practice and stimulation through the use of individual response cards.
3. Word-Line book. This part of the lesson emphasized blending and introduced many new sounds.

4. Workshop. This provided a daily period when most of the children worked independently. During this time the teacher formed extra-practice groups to meet individual needs of slower students.
5. Dictation and proofreading. The teacher dictated sounds, words, and sentences which the children wrote in their Blue Books. The teacher then put the proper spelling on the board, and the children proofread their own work, circling any mistake and writing the correct spelling above the mistake.

The second day's plan usually followed the following format:

1. Remaining exercises in the Blue Book. This gave practice and review of letters, sounds, and words presented in lesson one.
2. Reading and rereading of stories. The third page of each lesson in the Blue Book presented the stories. The children were motivated and guided in both silent and oral reading activities.
3. Workshop. Same as in first day's lesson.
4. Preview of next lesson. At the end of each lesson, new sounds and sample words for the next lesson were introduced.

Third Stage. Stage three of the Foundation Program included lessons 25-55 which introduced the remaining letter sounds. The Gold Book, containing dozens of fables and poems as well as exercises and opportunities for writing; and four storybooks with coordinated vocabulary comprised the basic materials for this part of the program. The lessons followed the same basic format as in stage two. Approximately ten weeks were spent on this stage of the program.

During this first semester Foundation Program, the teacher allotted approximately two and a half hours each day to these Language Arts activities. The same basic format was utilized for the daily lessons with minor adjustments being made as needed.

#### The Hard-Cover 1.2 Reader Program

The second semester of the Open Court program utilized the hard-cover 1.2 reader, Reading is Fun. It offered selections from all the basic subjects; science and nature, history and geography, art and music, and language and literature.

The lessons for the second semester's program were again designed to take two days. The first day's work covered background for the selection to be read, a "Words to Watch" section in which new or troublesome vocabulary was given attention, guided silent reading, discussion, and either a lesson on dictation or sentence lifting. On the second day, oral reading was followed by composition. Activities alternately included the reading and discussion of stories and poems, proofreading, and/or exercises in vocabulary, spelling, and word study.

Each day approximately two and a half hours were spent in Language Arts activities. The children had progressed through the 41st lesson of the hard-cover reader by the first of April when the study was concluded with the second form of the Gates-MacGintie Reading Test.

## CHAPTER V

### DESIGN AND RESULTS OF THE STUDY

#### I. DESIGN

The size of the population was limited to the number of students in the Open Court group and one group using a Basal Program. The two groups were equated by pairing a student from each group according to vocabulary and comprehension scores on the Gates-MacGintie Primary A Test - Form 1, scores from the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test, and sex. The study was designed to describe the reading achievement and reading attitudes of groups taught by two different reading instructional programs.

By testing the reading achievement of the two groups at the end of first grade, a mean difference in achievement between the groups was calculated. A simple "t" test between Independent Means was used to test the hypothesis of no difference between the mean scores corresponding to the Basal group and the Open Court group at the 5 percent level of confidence.

To describe the reading attitudes of the two groups, a simple ranking system was administered during the first part of April. The children were given a list of ten school subjects and asked to rank these from one to ten with a rank of one indicating their strongest preference. The ten subjects

included reading, art, writing, sharing time, story writing, math, P.E., library, singing, and science. On every third list the order of the subjects was rotated so that the position of reading on the list would not influence the choice. Two teachers and three sixth grade assistants were available to help the children identify the subjects on the list. The Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test was utilized to determine whether there was a significant difference in ranking between the two groups.

Several factors in the study were controllable. Each group received approximately the same amount of reading instruction and library time, and they both participated in similar activities in the content subjects.

The uncontrolled factor in the study was that different teachers taught the Basal and Open Court groups. They were matched as closely as possible in ability and experience, but there were naturally differences in personality.

## II. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

During the first week in April, 1969, both groups were given the Gates-MacGintie Primary A Test - Form 2. This provided scores in vocabulary and comprehension.

The vocabulary mean score for the Basal group was 32.5 while the mean score for the Open Court group was 31.8. This gave a mean difference between the two groups of .7.

The data for the test of the hypothesis that no difference between the mean scores corresponding to the Basal and the Open Court group is recorded on Table VI (page 63). The table shows that according to the "t" Test between Independent Means, there is no statistical difference in the mean achievement in vocabulary between the two groups at the 5 percent level.

The comprehension mean score for the group was 20.2 while the mean Basal score for the Open Court group was 18.3. This gave a mean difference between the two groups of 1.9. This produced no statistical difference in the mean achievement in comprehension between the two groups. This information is presented in Table VII (page 64.).

The Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test was used to compare the ranking of reading attitudes by the two groups. The observed T score of 35.5 was not found to be statistically significant at the 5 percent level. This information is shown in Table VIII (page 65).

TABLE VI

COMPARISON OF VOCABULARY SCORES ON THE  
GATES-MACGINTIE PRIMARY A TEST - FORM 2

Matched Pairs	Basal Group Raw Scores	Open Court Group Raw Scores	D Difference	D <sup>2</sup>
1	40	45	+5	25
2	45	42	-3	9
3	38	46	+8	64
4	33	38	+5	25
5	44	48	+4	16
6	39	43	+4	16
7	37	47	+10	100
8	22	20	-2	4
9	29	23	-6	36
10	36	29	-7	49
11	29	14	-15	225
12	19	16	-3	9
13	28	25	-3	9
14	34	27	-7	49
15	<u>15</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>-1</u>	<u>1</u>
	488 M=32.5	477 M=31.8	-11	637

$$i.) D = \frac{\sum D}{N} = \frac{-11}{15} = -.73$$

$$ii.) \sum d^2 = \sum D^2 - \frac{(\sum D)^2}{N} = 637 - 8.06 = 628.94$$

Therefore:

$$t = \frac{\frac{\bar{D}}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N(N-1)}}}}{\sqrt{\frac{628.94}{15(14)}}} = \frac{\frac{-.73}{3.13}}{\sqrt{3.13}} = \frac{-.73}{1.77} = -.42$$

$$df = 14$$

$$P = 0.05$$

TABLE VII

COMPARISON OF COMPREHENSION SCORES ON THE  
GATES-MACGINTIE PRIMARY A TEST - FORM 2

Matched Pairs	Basal Group Raw Scores	Open Court Group Raw Scores	D Difference	D <sup>2</sup>
1	23	19	-4	16
2	25	20	-5	25
3	21	31	+10	100
4	26	16	-10	100
5	17	30	+13	169
6	19	30	+11	121
7	22	29	+7	49
8	21	19	-2	4
9	18	14	-4	16
10	20	11	-9	81
11	21	5	-16	256
12	26	17	-9	81
13	22	13	-9	81
14	16	16	0	0
15	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>-2</u>	<u>4</u>
	304 M=20.2	275 M=18.3	-39	1083

$$i.) \bar{D} = \frac{\sum D}{N} = \frac{-39}{15} = -2.6$$

$$ii.) \sum d^2 = \sum D^2 - \frac{(\sum D)^2}{N} = 1083 - 101.4 = 981.6$$

Therefore:

$$t = \frac{\bar{D}}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N(N-1)}}} = \frac{-2.6}{\sqrt{\frac{981.6}{15(14)}}} = \frac{-2.6}{\sqrt{4.67}} = \frac{-2.6}{2.16} = -1.2$$

$$df = 14$$

$$P = 0.05$$



TABLE VIII

DISTRIBUTION OF RANK SCORES ASSIGNED TO READING  
BY THE TWO GROUPS

Matched Pairs	Basal Group Rank of Reading	Open Court Group Rank of Reading	d	Rank of d	Rank with Less Fre- quent Sign
1	10	5	+5	+10.5	
2	9	2	+7	+13	
3	9	6	+3	+8	
4	1	6	-5	-10.5	10.5
5	8	9	-1	-2	2
6	1	4	-3	-8	8
7	5	3	+2	+5	
8	8	1	+7	+13	
9	7	8	-1	-2	2
10	3	10	-7	-13	13
11	9	6	+3	+8	
12	3	1	+2	+5	
13	5	4	+1	+2	
14	10	1	+9	+15	
15	7	5	+2	+5	
					<u>T=35.5</u>

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### I. SUMMARY

The purpose was to study and describe two first grade reading programs. It was intended that the investigation should indicate whether the Open Court Correlated Language Arts Reading Program produced greater gains in achievement and more positive attitudes toward reading than did a traditional Basal Method of reading instruction.

Two groups were used in the descriptive study and these were equated as nearly as possible by pairing a student from each group according to vocabulary and comprehension scores on the Gates-MacGintie Reading Test, the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test, and sex. Fifteen matched pairs were formed.

The Basal group was taught reading according to the directions set down in the Ginn and Scott Foresman first grade basal readers, while the Open Court group followed the Open Court Language Arts Approach to teaching reading. After seven months of work in their respective programs, both groups were given a second form of the Gates-MacGintie Primary A Test. A comparison of the mean difference scores in reading vocabulary and comprehension was made between the two groups. According to the "t" Test between Independent Means, there was no statistical difference in the mean achievement

scores in vocabulary or comprehension for the two groups at the 5 percent level of confidence.

To compare the reading attitudes of the two groups a simple system of subject ranking was utilized. The children were asked to rank a list of ten school subjects with a rank of one indicating their strongest preference. The Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test was used to determine that there was no statistical difference in ranking between the two groups.

## II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

The study indicated that the two methods of teaching reading produced similar achievement in vocabulary and comprehension. The first null hypothesis was therefore accepted.

In comparing reading attitudes of the two groups, it was found that there was no statistical difference in the ranking of reading by the two groups, therefore, the second null hypothesis was also accepted.

If a program which stressed the correlation of the language arts produced normal reading growth as well as positive attitudes toward reading, there still might be several reasons to justify the use of these Open Court materials:

1. Research supports the intercorrelation between the language arts.
2. The teacher manuals presented well organized and diversified lessons which were easy to use.
3. The program provided excellently prepared student materials which save the teacher preparation time.

### Recommendations

Recommendations for further study would include the investigation of the following questions:

1. Does a Correlated Language Arts Program benefit high ability students to a greater extent than low ability students?

While collecting raw data from the Gates-MacGintie Reading Test, it appeared that the students who scored highest on Form A of the test given at the beginning of the year made the greatest gains by the end of the school year. This was also suggested by an informal investigation which was conducted in the Lake Washington School District during the 1968-69 school year. Although this particular aspect of the problem was not presented in this study, it might provide valuable information for the teacher using the Open Court Program.

2. Would a beginning teacher find the Open Court Program easier to use than a traditional Basal Program?

In becoming familiar with the Open Court Program and materials, the investigator was impressed with the thoroughness and organization of the teacher manuals. Lessons were presented so specifically that a novice could teach a systematic reading program by simply following the outlined procedures. It was therefore felt that this program might be more successfully employed by a beginning teacher than a Basal Program.

3. Would children in the Open Court Program show greater gains in reading comprehension and vocabulary if the study was conducted over a longer period of time?

Since any new program requires a period of adjustment for both the teacher and the pupils, the full benefit of the Open Court Program may not have been gained during the first year of use. Therefore, a longitudinal study extending over a three to six year period may have produced more positive results than the present one year investigation.

In conclusion, the Open Court Correlated Language Arts Program compared favorably with a traditional Basal Program which has survived the scrutiny of time and has provided generations with successful reading instruction. Since this

new program produced equal achievement in reading comprehension and vocabulary as well as positive attitudes toward reading, it was felt that the Open Court Program, because of favorable correlations to other components of language, may be a better initial instructional reading program for children.

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